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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH
REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES
AND PEOPLES

QUESTION OF SENDING VISITING MISSIONS TO TERRITORIES

Report of the Chairman

1. At its 1461st meeting, on 24 July 1996, the Special Committee adopted a resolution concerning the question of sending visiting missions to Territories.[1] The operative part of the resolution reads as follows:

"The Special Committee,

"...

"1. Stresses the need to dispatch periodic visiting missions to Non-Self-Governing Territories in order to facilitate the full, speedy and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples with respect to those Territories;

"2. Calls upon the administering Powers to cooperate or continue to cooperate with the United Nations by receiving United Nations visiting missions in the Territories under their administration;

"3. Requests the administering Powers to consider the new approaches in the work of the Special Committee, and calls upon them to cooperate with the Special Committee in its efforts;

"4. Requests its Chairman to continue consultations with the administering Powers concerned on the implementation of paragraph 2 of the present resolution and to report thereon to the Special Committee as appropriate;

"5. Also requests its Chairman to enter into consultations with the administering Power of Guam with a view to facilitating the dispatch of a United Nations visiting mission to that Territory."

2. On 27 March 1997, the General Assembly adopted without a vote resolution 51/224 A, of which paragraphs 5 and 6 read as follows:

"The General Assembly

"...

"5. Stresses the importance for the Special Committee to be apprised of the views and wishes of the peoples of the Territories and to enhance its understanding of their conditions;

"6. Reaffirms that United Nations visiting missions to the Territories at an appropriate time and in consultation with the administering Power are an effective means of ascertaining the situation in the Territories, and requests the administering Powers and the elected representatives of the peoples of the Territories to assist the Special Committee in this regard."

3. An account of the consultations held by the Chairman in accordance with paragraph 6 of resolution 51/224 A is set out below.

4. The Chairman held extensive consultations with representatives of the administering Powers on the question of sending visiting missions to Territories, in accordance with the mandate entrusted to him by the Special Committee. In drawing their attention to resolution 51/224 A and to related resolutions of the General Assembly, the Chairman informed the representatives of the administering Powers that the Special Committee continued to attach the utmost importance to the dispatch of United Nations visiting missions to the Non-Self-Governing Territories as a means of securing first-hand information on those Territories. The Chairman once again appealed to the administering Powers to cooperate or continue to cooperate with the United Nations in the sending of such missions. It was the understanding of the Special Committee, from an exchange of views that took place at its regional seminars held in 1990, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996 and 1997,[2] that some territorial Governments had expressed their willingness to receive United Nations visiting missions. The Chairman expressed the hope that, if such requests were made, the administering Powers concerned would cooperate and facilitate the dispatch of such missions to those Territories.

5. The Chairman informed the administering Powers that their full cooperation was essential for the successful implementation of the Plan of Action approved by the General Assembly for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. He took the opportunity to express his appreciation for their cooperation in facilitating the participation of a number of representatives from Non-Self-Governing Territories in the five seminars that the Special Committee had organized within the context of the Decade. He brought the attention of the administering Powers to the conclusions and recommendations of

the seminar held at St. John's and expressed the hope that they would continue to extend the same cooperation to the Committee.

6. The Chairman recalled with satisfaction that, at the invitation of the Government of New Zealand and the Council or Faipule of Tokelau, the Special Committee had dispatched a United Nations visiting mission to Tokelau in July 1994.

7. As in previous years, a number of the administering Powers consulted reiterated their willingness to continue to provide all necessary information on the Territories under their administration in fulfilment of their obligation under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations. The Chairman reiterated in his consultations with the administering Powers the need for visiting missions to ascertain the views of the peoples of the Territories concerned.

8. The representative of New Zealand reiterated the readiness of his Government to continue, in accordance with established practice and procedure, to provide the Committee with all relevant information on Tokelau and to participate in the related work of the Special Committee. The representative expressed the hope that in view of the current constitutional developments in Tokelau it would be possible for the people of the Territory to decide soon on their future status, according to their own time-frame.

9. The Chairman will keep the Special Committee apprised of any further developments in his consultations with the administering Powers concerned on this question.

10. A list of the visiting missions dispatched by the Special Committee or by the General Assembly is contained in the annex to the present report.

Notes

[1] See A/51/23 (Part II), chap. IV, para. 18. The complete report will be issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 23 (A/51/23).

[2] Regional seminars were held in Vanuatu (A/AC.109/1040 and Corr.1) and Barbados (A/AC.109/1043) in 1990; in Grenada (A/AC.109/1114) in 1992 and in Papua New Guinea (A/AC.109/1159) in 1993; in Trinidad and Tobago (A/AC.109/2030) in 1995; in Papua New Guinea (A/AC.109/2058) in 1996; and in Antigua and Barbuda in 1997 (A/AC.109/2089). The first two were held in observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; the last five were held in the context of the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

ANNEX

Visiting missions dispatched by the Special Committee or the General Assembly

1965	Cook Islands (election supervision)
1966	Equatorial Guinea
1967	Aden
1968	Equatorial Guinea (referendum/election supervision)
1971	Papua New Guinea (jointly with the Trusteeship Council)
1972	Niue Papua New Guinea (election observation, jointly with the Trusteeship Council)
1974	Niue (referendum observation) Cocos (Keeling) Islands Gilbert and Ellice Islands (referendum observation)
1975	Cape Verde Montserrat Spanish Sahara
1976	British Virgin Islands Tokelau
1977	French Somaliland (referendum/election observation) Cayman Islands United States Virgin Islands
1979	Guam New Hebrides
1980	Turks and Caicos Islands (April) Cocos (Keeling) Islands Turks and Caicos Islands (October/November) (election observation)
1981	Tokelau American Samoa
1982	Montserrat
1984	Cocos (Keeling) Islands (act of self-determination) Anguilla
1986	Tokelau
1989	Namibia (election observation)
1994	Tokelau